

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

ALABAMA GOODWILL AMBASSADOR (AGA) PROGRAM

PURPOSE

AGA's are volunteer sponsors who assist our international officers and their families. AGA's ease their transition into the local community and, through their friendship, help to foster international relations, make international officers and their families feel welcome, and create a lasting, positive impression of our nation and people.

DISCUSSION

- The requirement for a sponsorship program is dictated by Air Force Instruction 16-105, Joint Security Cooperation Education & Training
- The program began some 40 years ago between Air University (AU) and Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, but later expanded to include other civic clubs, churches, and individuals
- Originally called the International Sponsor Program, became the Alabama Goodwill Ambassador Program in 1989
 - Current name reflects the special relationship between the community, students, and AU
- AGA's are recruited a variety of ways and trained by IOS; they are as diverse as our students and families
 - IOS actively recruits throughout the community; many of our new volunteers are referred by current AGA's.
 - AGA training is designed to set expectations for the program and impart an understanding of cultural differences (Do's and Don't's). Overall, AGA's are asked to just be themselves.
- AGA's assist our international students and families in a variety of ways:
 - Social gatherings (dinners, sporting events, local activities)
 - Car & home finding; location advice; information on schools, etc.
 - Discuss local beliefs and values; politics & religion only if students initiate

SUMMARY

The AGA program is a community sponsorship program comprised of volunteers from the local community. AGAs are a one-of-a-kind resource that enable personal relationships both with the international military students and their families.